

April 2011

Volume 2, Issue 4

# The Newsletter

## UP

This year instead of the church ordering and selling Easter flowers, we would like you to bring in your choice of potted flowers for Easter. Buy them anywhere you choose and bring them to church anytime between Palm Sunday and Easter. Put them in the Narthex. We will make sure they are displayed on Easter Sunday.

Also, don't forget our Maunday Thursday Communion Service on April 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:30pm

Nancy Steuart, UP chairperson

## IN

## OUT

### AS I SEE IT...

Picture it . . . 3 ladders in a row, each one taller than the one next to it, positioned next to the church. Picture it . . . one brave human being climbing the shortest ladder, then instead of climbing down the ladder, he stretches his leg to the next ladder, climbs it, and instead of climbing down the ladder, he stretches his leg, once again, to the next ladder and climbing even higher. If you're already holding your breath and shaking your collective human heads, you are not alone. Your human preacher had the same reaction after watching Danny Vangen painting the church's eaves. I don't think Danny is afraid of anything! In other words, he's crazy! Ha! He's crazy about serving God!

WOW!! That's the only word this old mouse can use to describe the wonderful music coming from our sanctuary. I'm talking about the wonderful piano music that Emily Williams and her school friends shared with the world. Thanks Emily for sharing your friends and their gifts with the church!

And speaking of sharing, thanks to so many of you for sharing your generosity with our youth at their annual baked potato luncheon. Old Freddy is especially grateful that you shared your crumbs with him. One thing for sure, I'm more efficient than a Swiffer mop.



Until next month . . .

### JOHN'S JOTS

Frank Viola recently blogged the following:

“Jesus often comes to us in unexpected ways and unexpected means.

Think about how He came to Earth. For centuries, Israel had waited for a political Messiah. They expected Him to lead a rebellion and free Israel from Roman oppression. But how did the Messiah make His entrance? He came in a way that made it easy for His own people to reject Him. He came as a frail baby, born in a feeding room for animals. There He was. The promised Messiah who was expected to overthrow the Roman Empire and set Israel free from oppression. A needy Nazarene born in a manger.

When Jesus grew up, He ate and drank in their presence and taught in their streets (Luke 13:26). Yet they didn't recognize Him. He was unassumingly modest. A mere craftsman; the son of a craftsman. He grew up in the despised city of Nazareth, fraternizing with the despised and oppressed. But more startling, He befriended sinners (Luke 7:34). As such, the people of God didn't recognize Him. Why?

Because He came in a way that made it easy for them to reject Him. And what about the disciples? Read the story again. Jesus continued to break out of their expectations. He couldn't be pinned down, figured out or boxed in. The Twelve were constantly confounded by Him. His teachings were offensive. His actions scandalous. His reactions baffling.

But the greatest offense of all was the cross. It offended everyone—both Jew and Gentile. The only crown the promised Messiah-King would accept was a crown of thorns. Look at Him again. A suffering Messiah, a defeated King. It's easy to reject Him.

One of the Lord's most faithful disciples teaches us this principle well. Mary Magdalene was the first person to see Jesus after His death and resurrection. Do you remember what she did as soon as she recognized Him? She grabbed Him, and she wouldn't stop clinging to Him. Jesus responded, "Stop clinging to me" (see John 20:17, Greek text). Why did Jesus tell Mary to stop clinging to Him? Because Jesus had somewhere to go. He was on the move. Jesus was poised to go to Galilee to see the other disciples and then to ascend to His Father.

Note the principle: He was moving forward, but she was clinging to Him. Jesus was in effect saying to her: "Mary, stop holding on to me. There's a new way to know me that's different from what you've experienced thus far. Let me go. I must move on." Do you remember the disciples who walked on the road to Emmaus?

Their hopes were shattered by Jesus' horrible death. Suddenly, the resurrected Christ began walking beside them, yet their eyes were blinded from recognizing Him. However, when He engaged in the very simple gesture of breaking bread (something He had done frequently before them), their eyes were opened. He then quickly disappeared from their sight.

These stories hold a critical insight. You cannot cling to the Christ you know today. He will vanish from your midst. Jesus Christ is an elusive Lover. Seeking Him is a progressive engagement that never ends. He doesn't dance to our music. He doesn't sing to our tune.

Perhaps He will in the beginning when He woos us, but that season will eventually end. Just when you think you've laid hold of Him, He will slip out of your grasp. He will appear to you as a stranger. But on second glance, we'll discover He's no stranger at all. Emmaus will be repeated.

We all wish to cling to the Lord who we know now. We all wish to hold on to the Christ who has been revealed to us today.

But mark my words: He will come to us in a way we do not expect—through people we're prone to ignore and inclined to write off. Perhaps they don't talk our religious language. Perhaps they aren't theologically sophisticated. Perhaps they don't use our vocabulary. Perhaps they don't share our insider knowledge nor parrot our religious idioms.

So we cling fast to the Lord we recognize—receiving only those who talk our language, use our jargon and employ our catchphrases—and all along we end up turning the Lord Jesus Christ away. What, then, does Jesus do after we fail to receive Him when He comes to us in an unexpected way? He moves on. And the revelation we have of Him ceases to grow. Jesus Christ is richer, larger and more glorious than any of us could ever imagine. And He comes to us in ways that make it tempting to reject Him.

When Peter, James and John saw the transfigured Lord on the holy mountain, Peter wanted to build a tabernacle for Jesus, Moses and Elijah and remain on the mountain to enjoy the encounter. But God would not allow it (Matthew 17:1-13).

There is something in our fallen nature that, like Peter, wishes to build a monument around a spiritual encounter with God and remain there. But the Lord will not have it. He will always break free from our frail attempts to pin Him down, box Him up and hold Him in place. And He does so by coming to us in new and unexpected ways.”

So where do you see Jesus going these days? What do you see Jesus doing in you, and through you (and others)? Where is Jesus breaking into your world?

I've been seeing Jesus at work in folks opening their eyes to the world around them. I've seen Jesus working though folks in small groups who are reading a book that is challenging the way they've looked at the issue of justice. I've seen Jesus at work in folks who are really struggling to understand what the Word of God is saying to them. I've seen Jesus at work in folks challenging the assumptions they've had about certain groups of people and the way we view doing church.

For a long time I've worked under the assumption that the purpose of the church is to increase our love of God and all humanity. This was the premise of American theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr. In all of the above mentioned ways I've seen Jesus at work in the lives of others here at our church, I've seen Jesus helping us fulfill the purpose of the church.

What I'm seeing is not a program, it's a movement of God. The thing is, it's hard to strategize a God movement. We cannot predict what God will do next in our lives or in the lives of others. We cannot dictate steps to take when it's a movement of God. There is no strategic plan to implement in a God movement. All we can do is intentionally listen to the Spirit of God and act on the impulse of the Holy within us.

So my dear friends, let me ask you . . . what do you see Jesus doing . . . in your life . . . in the world around you . . . in this church God has given us? Where do you plan on following Jesus? Where is Jesus leading you? Where do you see Jesus leading the church God has given us?

Shalom,

Pastor John

## MISC. NEWS



The youth of DCC sponsored a Baked Potato Luncheon on Sunday, March 13 and it was a big success. We decorated the Fellowship Hall in shades of green for a St. Patrick's Day theme and

everyone was a bit Irish that day. This was a fundraiser for the youth and thanks to your generous donations, we raised \$246 for the youth fund.

It's time to begin planning for Camp Christian! The registration forms can be printed from the website, [www.ccinoh.org](http://www.ccinoh.org). Plan now to attend, so you can take advantage of the Early Bird savings!

Thanks to all who support the youth at DCC!

Jeri & John Pendergest

Youth Advisors

## **DEACON'S SERVING SCHEDULE FOR APRIL**

Jeri Pendergest, Frankie Ittel, Debbie Ittel, Tad Adams, Tonya Storck, Terri Cox

## **APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

Tonya Storck	1
John Pendergest	2
Jake Elwell	4
Cliff Shanholtzer	17
Heather Kuckuck	23
Ellen Lewis	28

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

Lois Johnson – Shut In  
Mitchell and Helen Deaton – dealing with health issues  
Kim Vangen – rehabing new hip  
Vada Lee Accirido – Lois Johnson's sister in law, has cancer  
Hershel Estridge – Lois Johnson's cousin, dealing with health issues  
Ron Hurst – dealing with health issues  
Gene Thomas – dealing with health issues  
Don Gross – HOME AND BACK AT CHURCH!!  
Ray Scheffler – at Heartland of Woodridge  
Kathy Baughman – death of her Mother



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